



## Three “World Firsts” for Australian Festival of Cricket

**The world’s first “5-a-side NetsMatch” will be launched at this year’s Australian Festival of Cricket.** The NetsMatch was created to encourage more children to play cricket - an outdoors game played within a special net, which can be completed within 30-40 minutes – a cross between 20/20 and indoor cricket – but the batsman doesn’t run!

This year, new technology from Telstra Countrywide has made it possible for the event to be webcast live throughout Australia and across the cricketing world, with downloads of every aspect of the Festival available on the website for the next 12 months – **a world first for such an event!**

The Australian Festival of Cricket, a not-for-profit organization, is **the only event in the world dedicated to acknowledging and honouring those who make the great game possible** – the hundreds of thousands who support the game at every level. The Bradman Oval will be filled with demonstrations, equipment displays, forums, clinics....you can try to “stump an umpire”, or get your name onto the world’s first National register of bowling and throwing speed – “SpeedBall”. There is even a specialist cricket chiropractor on hand to show how to immediately improve throwing and bowling performance. As Mark Taylor commented at last year’s launch: “It’s such a great concept...it’s a wonder it hasn’t been done before!”

The Festival is also establishing a Foundation to help fund the training and apprenticeships of Australia’s future bat and ball makers, umpires, curators and disadvantaged young potential cricketers in remote parts of Australia. Festival organisers are bringing 15 such young Aboriginal cricketers to the Festival this year, to support Cricket Australia’s display which pays tribute to the role played by indigenous cricketers in the country.

It’s an event that celebrates the spirit of cricket and the contribution to the game made by high-profile professionals, local teams and clubs, behind-the-scenes administrators, umpires, the media, equipment makers, curators, the army of passionate volunteers and the millions who just support the game.

The Australian Festival of Cricket, to be run over the November 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> weekend, is timed to co-incide with the arrival of the English Test team with the original Ashes urn, on November the 8<sup>th</sup>. The England and Wales Cricket Board will also be supporting this year’s event, along with Cricket Australia, Cricket NSW and The Bradman Foundation.

Last year, Alan Jones AO presented the “Service to Cricket” Medal to 93 year-old Jim White OAM, founder of the Emu Cricket Club. This year an additional Medal will be presented – that of “Innovation in Cricket”.

Other highlights include the world’s best blind batsman demonstrating his amazing skills, the world’s best bat maker and ball maker demonstrate their traditional craft, the 1868 Australian team (the first to tour England) being honoured in an Indigenous Cricket Exhibition, on loan from Melbourne, the MCC Curator Adam Chadwick, speaking about the restoration process involved in the Ashes Urn

The Australian Festival of Cricket will be held for the second year at the Bradman Oval and Museum, Bowral on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> November 2006. For further information contact Elizabeth Nichols on (02) 4861 7100 or [Elizabeth@festivalofcricket.com](mailto:Elizabeth@festivalofcricket.com)

*Photo and interview opportunities with Jason Gillespie and 15 young disadvantaged Aboriginal children from far West NSW, or former Test Captain Brian Booth with young cricketers at the Bradman statue, Bowral.*

*Radio Interviews also available with Bruce Nichols, (02) 4861 7100*

